



STATE OF MICHIGAN

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Republican leaders want cigarette tax and long-term solutions addressed together

Sikkema, Johnson supporting short-term fixes only as long as solutions for long-term stability of economy see action

LANSING – Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema and House Speaker Rick Johnson today said they will continue working toward passage of the governor's proposed cigarette tax increase as long as the focus remains on long-term solutions to Michigan's budget problems.

"Annual budget challenges come and go. The real question facing Michigan is what can be done to create a future of economic growth, business investment and job creation," said Sikkema, R-Wyoming. "Solving a budget deficit is important, but taking action to build a future of economic prosperity is more important. The governor has a plan to fix some of the short-term budget problems. Republicans have a plan to address the long-term problems. These solutions are not mutually exclusive."

Sikkema and Johnson said the economic health of Michigan is tied to creating new jobs, saving existing jobs and promoting a more competitive business climate in Michigan. Both leaders agreed that legislative initiatives under the banner of the Republican JOBS Action Plan are part of the solution.

"The budget deficit is merely a symptom – the underlying problems are the loss of jobs and a changing economy," said Johnson, R-LeRoy. "By working together, we can put Michigan in a position to address these problems. The House has taken the first step in moving this process forward. We needed to get the spotlight off of this single issue so the Legislature and the governor can focus on the big picture of Michigan's long-term budget stability."

The manufacturing sector is expected to play an important but reduced role in Michigan's future, whereas the role of research, technology and life sciences will be expanding. Sikkema said it is imperative for the state to make balanced investments across the diverse economy of the future.

"The JOBS legislation is a broad-based plan that takes action by reducing onerous taxes, cutting back on burdensome regulations and moving Michigan forward in many different business sectors," Sikkema said. "To compete, we must be competitive. To survive, we must be strong. To see a bright future, we must focus on long-term issues."

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